A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, April 20. 1708.

IN my Laſt I look'd abroad, and now I come to look at home; I view'd then the State of Affairs as to the War with *France*, I muſt view now the State of the War with *Jacobitiſm* and *High-Flyers*; that fatal War of Parties which has for ſo many Years embroil'd this unhappy Nation; and in this Strife where ſhall I begin?

Shall I begin at the Houſe of GOD, where Himſelf will begin in his Judgments, when he comes as a Refiner, and when he marks out for Deſtruction, and begins at the Sanctuary? Miſerable Nation! How is a mortal Feud entred into our Sacred Things, and particularly among our Holy Men? Here's One bids ſtand off, I am more Holy than thou, and at the ſame time for Lewdneſs out-ſins the Stews, for Loudneſs out-rails the Sons of Strife, for Lying out goes Mr. *R——w*, for Malice the Reverend *K.* or *M.* or *B.* or the worſt of the furious Race—Another cries out for Chriſtianity and Occaſional Sincerity, but damns Moderation as a Phanatical Plot—Again, *P.* diſſents in Worſhip, but conforms in Crime, and *G.* tho' ſtrict in Morals, moſt immorally condemns unheard all that reach not the Infallibility, he himſelf pretends to.

Shall I come to the Pulpit? Inſtead of common Charity for one another, What Anathema's thunder from that Sacred Place, upon their diſagreeing Comrades? How do they preach Strife for the Goſpel of Peace, preach themſelves inſtead of preaching Chriſt Jeſus, and preach for themſelves not for the Good of their Hearers?

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Should I descend to Particulars, and name Persons, I must make this a second Part to the Grounds and Reasons of the Contempt of the Clergy; for who can help having contemptible Thoughts of Men, who put the Wildfire of their own Passions to the cool, calm, still Voice of the Gospel, and employ Religion to confound and destroy that World it was design'd to civilize and reform.

Gentlemen of the *High Church*, will you hearken to the Advice was given from the Pulpit, by a Reverend and Venerable Father of your own Church, whose Name, if I should tell it you, would fill you with Blushes, that you should so little practise, what he has so gravely and so significantly proposed— *It makes our Hearts bleed, says he, to see so much Strife and Contention among Christians, on Points which are so far from being Essential to the Christian Religion, that they are not Essential to our common Happiness——— Would to GOD we could all the Christian more, and that all the Emulation and all the Contention, that was now among us, were to be about who lives best, who should preach best, and practise most agreeably to the Rules of Christianity, there would be so much Humility in this Strife, thus according to the Blessed Apostles Rule, we should every Man esteem each other better than Himself.*———

I cannot but joyn in regretting wide Breaches for narrow Disputes; Things that might be reduc'd into a very small Compass, and yet by the Industry of wicked Men are dilated into all the wildest Extremes, till *English* Men are ready to cut one anothers Throats for Peace Sake, and send one another to Hell, because they cannot agree about which Way they shall go to Heaven.

But I avoid entring into this melancholly and unhappy Dispute; I come from our Religious to our Politick Contention, and certainly in this we are the most unhappy People in the World, the most inconsistent with our selves, and the most unaccountably blinded by our Passions, and subdued by our Prejudices—And this so founded upon wretched Trifles, that no People in the World ever invaded their own Peace, on such trivial, incongruous, unconcerted Occasions.

Let us examine but the Contradictions now moving in this Island, and let any Nation in the World match them if they can: Here *Jacobites* swear to the QUEEN, and yet remain *Jacobites*, *Whigs* act against Principle and yet remain *Whigs*; in the *North* the *Presbyterian* scruples the Abjuration, and yet abhors the *Jacobite* Cause, the Episcopal Man takes it, and yet adheres to *James* VIII. (*Anglicè* the *Pretender*) the many Sects in Politicks exceed those in Religion; the QUEEN is in danger from swearing Protestants, and yet safe from enlightned Papists— Those that cannot swear take up Arms against the Invasion, and those that swallow all sorts of Oaths wish and wait for it.

Shall we come nearer the Publick Affairs; how do we see the Patriots of Liberty practising the grossest Corporation Tyranny, those that pretend to be for the Revolution long for, and put their Hands to the Work of a Revolution, and would bring upon us the very Tyrants they expell'd; in Politicks no bounds are observ'd, but these Contradictions flow on every hand, and as Confusion ought always to agree with it self, so indeed it compleatly finishes the signification of the Word, for all things they do are contradicting and inconsistent, and it seems to me, one of the hardest things in the World to give an Account of them; and I am perswaded, had *Solomon* in his Days, known such a Generation of People as these, he would have added it to his three Things that were too wonderful for him.

We have a new Society of Gentlemen, they say, set up, who answer difficult Questions, solve Ænigma's, and unfold Mysteries; I wish they would tell me, if it lyes in their way, *asking their Pardon, for putting a Question or two to them, that no body could ever Answer*; What is the Signification of such Words as these?

1. A Priest swearing to QUEEN *ANN*, and praying for King *James* III.
2. A Lay-Man taking the Abjuration, and pursuing a *Jacobite* Interest.
3. A *Non-Jurant Rehearsal* defending the Church of *England*.

4. A

4. A drove of Parſons at .... Coffee-Houſe, crying up the *Rebearſal*, that cryes them all down as Schiſmaticks.
5. Propoſals for Uniting the Church of *England* with the Church of *France*, and entirely abhorring all manner of Union with *Engliſh* Diſſenters, to the Glory of both the Charity and Principles of the Church of *England*.

Vide Leſley's Regale and Pontificate.

Help, help, Gentlemen, of *APOLLO*, or of any Society or Oracle in the World, that can dive into theſe hidden Works of Darkneſs: In the abundant Sence of my own incapacity, to define theſe unſignifying Novelties, I am your humble Petitioner; That you would be pleas'd to unfold a few of theſe Myſteries, and I ſhall not fail to make Publick Acknowledgment of your Skill.

O *Bickerſtaff*, *Bickerſtaff*, wonderful *Bickerſtaff*, Eſq; here is work to puzzle your Oracle! you, that in ſo wonderful a manner, foretel the Fate of Men to Hours and Moments, no matter whether they come to paſs or no, for according to the Great Sir *Richard Buckley*, it is not eſſential to a True Prophet, that what he Prophecies ſhould come to paſs; wherefore, I humbly entreat this great Genius, that ſo exactly foretold the Death of Mr. *Partridge* the *Almanack*-maker, that his Elegy was cry'd about ſtreets the very day, and you know, Men's Elegies are never made till they are dead: O Eſquire, Eſquire, tell us, tell us, if you can, the Meaning of ſome of theſe *ſtrange and wonderful*s.

But if you cannot tell us the Meaning, for indeed if you do, you muſt have an Art beyond the D....l; Why then, pray Gentlemen, tell us ſomething of their Conſequences; tell us what the People mean by theſe Contradictions, and if you cannot, I ſhall tell you a little of it my ſelf; and really Gentlemen, could I draw the Picture lively enough, could I deſcribe effectually, the Conſequences of our miſerable Diviſions; the Picture would make, even thoſe very Gentlemen ſtart at it, that in their Practice form it; I ſhall make a ſhort Eſſay at it in my next.

MISCELLANEA.

PErfect Tranquility in *Scotland*, ſtark calm, all quiet, that is the Word now in all our News; the *French* gone back again *re infecta*, the Danger entirely over, our Fleet come away, and our Army returning, and all as you were; the DIVERSION of our Forces, one of the main Ends of the *French*, diſappointed, and our Troops in a fair way, of being back again in *Flanders* time enough, to be at the Opening the Campaign.

Well, we come to give you all Joy of the ſhort Campaign, and of your Deliverance from the Dangers that threaten'd— But pray, Gentlemen of *Britain*, have you bought any *French* Spectacles, have you obtain'd by this Great Attempt any help to your Politick Eye-ſight?—The *French* have, GOD be prais'd, done us no harm, but have they done us no good? let me talk with you a little about the Good they have done us.

It has always been *England*'s Fate, and will, I doubt be ſtill ſo as to Great *Britain*, to have our Enemies be our Inſtructors, nay, to have our very Deſtroyers prove our Deliverers: *I cannot deny*, but it is a Teſtimony of National Blindneſs and intollerable Obſtinacy; but I am not talking now of what it is a Teſtimony of, *ſo it is*, and ſo I am afraid it will be to the end of the Chapter.

To go back but a little way, and not out of Memory; it was King *Charles* II. by his unſufferable Impoſitions, open'd the Eyes of that very Parliament, which he had blinded by his Penſions and Bribes; King *James* himſelf, even as I might ſay, with his own Hands, brought on the Revolution, and lifted up the Hands of thoſe very

very People against him that brought him in, and set him upon the Throne; his own precipitancy pushing the People into the extream Remedy they had recourse to.

To come nearer, yet in the first Year of Her Majesty's Reign, how did the Madness and Fury of a High-Flying Ministry, force the Nation and the Government, to cast them from them with the utmost Contempt; how did they bring us to a Necessity, either of dethroning their expectations, as to a Revolution in Succession, or of owning the QUEEN an Usurper, and holding the Crown as Tenant for Life; a Story, which if ever it comes to be truly told, will discover more Wickedness, than most People have Hearts to charge that Party with; and when I may enter farther into it, *as in Time I may*, will lay open a black Design, not only against her Majesty's Government, but even against— Of which hereafter.

Again, In our new Attempt to ruin our Peace, and restore the Blessedness of Persecution among us—Who lost the Occasional-Bill, and brought it into the Contempt it deserv'd all over this Nation? But that Hot Party who in the *House of Commons* refused to yield to the few and trifling Amendments, the Lords made to the first Bill, which if they had *done*, we had been all *undone*; but the mad Men resolving to make no Abatements, and rejecting all Amendments, secure of carrying all before them, lost the Whole on Conditions, *which allegorically speaking*, they would have hang'd themselves to have obtain'd afterward.

In their farther prosecuting that mischievous Project, how were they entirely defeated, how brought to Despair, and give it over? Purely by their own rash and unaccountable Project of TACKING; by this they saw'd the *Dissenters*, when had they had the least Policy, Temper or Foresight, they had ruin'd them and the Nations Peace with them.

How many honest *Whigs* have we now in this Nation, who are the meer Converts of *High-Flying* Precipitations? How has the Madness of this Party given Eyes to the Blind, and Wisdom to Men of no Understanding? How has it brought to their Senses the deluded Gentlemen, that not believing any thing of the Villany design'd, became perfectly surpriz'd when the Mask was thrown off, and they saw to what Precipice they were brought? How they were brought to put their Hands to the Destruction of their Country's Peace, and to the hazarding the Liberties of the People.

Thus, Gentlemen, you see the Effect of *High Flying*, and how the rash precipitant Councils of our Enemies have under GOD been the Means of our Preservation; all this is Introduction, I shall endeavour to be more particular in my next.

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